

of Ireland and Northern Ireland the chance to choose peace over conflict, indeed, to choose life over death.

When I visited Ulster, and later the Republic of Ireland, the great Nobel Prize-winning Irish poet, Seamus Heaney, gave me a stanza from a poem he wrote that today hangs on the wall of my office in the upstairs of the White House. Its message has a special meaning today. Here's what it says:

History says, *Don't hope*
On this side of the grave.

But then, once in a lifetime
The longed-for tidal wave
Of justice can rise up,
And hope and history rhyme.

What a wonderful Easter gift for the Irish, Irish-Americans, and lovers of peace everywhere.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 3:30 p.m. on April 10 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on April 11.

Statement on School Crime

April 12, 1998

Today the Attorney General and Secretary of Education forwarded to me an important, but troubling, study on school crime. Although the study shows that the overall crime rate in our schools did not change significantly between 1989 and 1995, it confirms that some schools have serious problems. Most disturbing, the study found that the number of students reporting gangs in their schools has nearly doubled. This is unacceptable. Gangs—and the guns, drugs, and violence that go with them—must be stopped from ever reaching the schoolhouse door.

Congress can help lead the way by passing the antigang and youth violence strategy that

I sent to them more than a year ago. It is based on what we know works—tough, targeted deterrence and better antigang prevention. Through this approach, police and prosecutors in Boston literally disarmed the gangs and brought juvenile gun murders to a halt. We should not wait any longer to help other communities do the same.

NOTE: This statement was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 11, but it was embargoed for release until 6:30 p.m. on April 12.

Remarks at the White House Easter Egg Roll

April 13, 1998

The President. Thank you. Good morning. Isn't it a wonderful morning? Let me say, I want to thank all the volunteers and all the sponsors who've made this wonderful day possible for thousands and thousands of young people.

I also want to say that the first official White House egg roll occurred here in 1878 when President Rutherford Hayes was living in the White House. Now, a lot of things have changed since then, but the most important thing today that you need to know is that for the very first

time, hundreds of thousands of young people will be experiencing the White House egg roll through the Internet, thanks to EarthLinks, and I want to thank them for that.

I'd also like to thank a number of others, and especially Sun Microsystems, for all the work that's been done to try to open the White House to people around the world and especially around our country. But this day is special because of what EarthLinks has done to let lots and lots of young people who never could come to the White House be part of the egg roll.

So, are we ready to start the egg roll?

Hillary Clinton. Bernie's right here.

The President. Bernie, where's the whistle? This is the one thing every year I know, no matter what else happens, I will do right. [Laughter] Are you ready, kids? Are you ready?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. I'm going to count to three and blow the whistle. One, two, three!

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:12 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to White House volunteer Bernie Fairbanks.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With Former Senator George J. Mitchell April 13, 1998

Possible Visit to Ireland

Q. Mr. President, are you going to make a trip to Ireland?

The President. Well, if it would help, of course I would be willing to go, but I think it's important not to make that decision yet. I haven't had a chance to talk to the two Prime Ministers about it or the leaders of the main parties. If they think I should go—and they've got the biggest stake and the closest sense of the public—I would be happy to do it. But I have not decided to do it, and it's really completely up to them.

Q. Do you think that it might constitute sort of unwarranted interference in their affairs for you to go before the referendums?

The President. That's a decision I want them to make. That's why I said I don't think it's my place, really, to deal with this one way or the other. I'm not going to weigh in on it. I'm always willing to do whatever I can to help, but I don't want to do something that would undermine the chances of success. I want to do whatever I can to increase the chances that the parties themselves and the public now will make a decision.

U.S. Ambassador to Ireland

Q. Are you sending Riley to Ireland?

The President. I have made no decision about the next Ambassador to Ireland. I've made no decision about that.

Q. Why?

The President. Because I haven't. I haven't had time. I've been doing other things.

President's Income Taxes

Q. How much are you paying on your taxes?

The President. A bunch. I don't know. We'll give you the form today.

Northern Ireland Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, could you see yourself naming a successor to Senator Mitchell, a person to be on the ground, a new sort of peace envoy, to help the Irish and the British through a new phase?

The President. No one has even suggested that to me yet. I think what we should all be focused on now is getting the facts of the agreement out to the Irish publics, letting the people in the North and in the Republic vote their convictions, and then see where we are.

As I said, I'm always willing to do whatever I can to help, but the role of the United States here is a supporting role. And to try to help—as I said, we should always try to help create or preserve the environment within which peace can occur and progress, and then encourage the parties that have to make the decisions, including the general public. And so I'm open to that. But there has literally been no discussion of that. Nothing.

Q. Have you seen the agreement yet, and what chances do you give it?

The President. Of course I've seen it. I'm not a handicapper. I want to be encouraging. The important thing is that the public that I saw there in December of '95 in both communities wanted peace. They wanted an honorable peace. They wanted a process by which they could begin to work together. And I think that the agreement that Senator Mitchell has hammered out, that the parties have agreed to, provides them that chance, and I hope that they will seize it.